"The Cat's Christmas Party." The Merry Antics of Puss and Her Young Friends Around the Xmas Tree.

By Louis Wain, the Greatest Living Artist and Delineator of Cat Character and the Funny Side of Cat Life.

THE FAITH CURE MAN

A PATHETIC CHRISTMAS STORY OF A COLORED MAMMY

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR
AMERICA'S FAMOUS NEGRO WRITER

HOPE is tenacious. It goes on living and working when science has dealt it what should be its death blow.

In the close room at the top of the old tenement house little Lucy lay wasting away with a relentless disease. The doctor had said at the beginning of the Winter that she could not live. Now he said that he could do no more for her except to ease the few days that remained for the child.

But Martha Benson would not believe him. She was confident that doctors were not infallible. Anyhow, this one wasn't, for she saw life and health ahead for her little one.

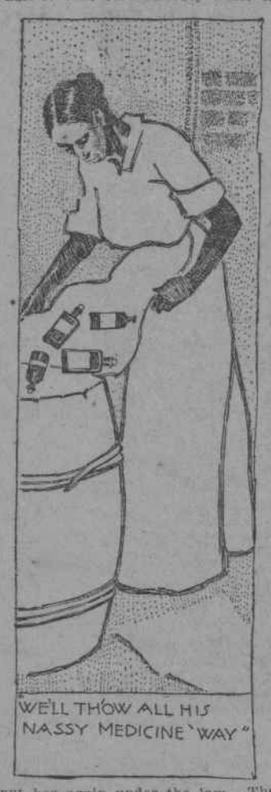
Did not the preacher at the Mission Home say: "Ask, and ye shall receive?" and had she not asked and asked again the life of her child, her last and only one, at the hands of Him whom she worshipped?

No, Lucy was not going to die. What she needed was country air and a place to run about in. She had been housed up too much; these long Northern Winters were too severe for her, and that was what made her so pinched and thin and weak. She must have air, and she should have it.

"Po' little lammie," she said to the child, "Mammy's little gal boun' to git well. Mammy gwine sen' huh out in de country when the Spring comes, whah she kin roll in de grass an' pick flowers an' git good an' strong. Don' baby want to go to de country? Don' baby want to see de sun shine?" And the child had looked up at her with wide, bright eyes, tossed her thin arms and moaned for reply.

"Mem'mine, we gwine fool dat doctah. Some day we'll th'ow all his nassy medicine 'way, an' he come in an' say: 'Whaih's all my medicine?' Den we answeh up sma't like: 'We done th'owed it out. We don' need no nassy medicine.' Den he look 'roun an' say: 'Who dat I see runnin' roun' de flo' hyeah, a-lookin' so fat?' an' you up an' say: ''Hit's me, dat's who 'tis, mistah doctor man!' Den he go out an' slam de do' behin' him. Ain' dat fine!"

But the child had closed her eyes, too weak to even listen. So her mother kissed her little thin forehead and tiptoed out, sending in a child from across the hall to take care of Lucy while she was at work, for sick as the little one was she could not stay at home and nurse her.



Hope grasps at a straw, and it was quite in keeping with the condition of Martha's mind that she should open her ears and her heart when they told her of the wonderful works of the faith-cure man. People had gone to him on crutches, and he had touched or rubbed them and they had come away whole. He had gone to the homes of the bed-ridden, and they had risen up to bless him. It was so easy for her to believe it all. The only religion she had ever known, the wild, emotional religion of most of her race, put her credulity to stronger tests than that. Her only question was, would such a man come to her humble room. But she put away even this thought. He must come. She would make him. Already she saw Lucy strong, and running about like a mouse, the joy of her heart and the light of her eyes.

It was December, the week before Christmas, when she went humbly to see the faith doctor, and laid her case before him, hoping, fearing, trembling.

Yes, he would come. Her heart leaped for joy.

"There is no place," said the faith curist, "too humble for the messenger of heaven to enter. I am following One who went among the humblest and the lowliest, and was not ashamed to be found among publicans and sinners. I will come to your child, madam, and put her again under the law. The law of life is health, and no one who will accept the law need be sick. I am not a physician. I do not claim to be. I only claim to teach people how not to be sick. My fee is $5, merely to defray my expenses, that's all. You know the servant is worthy of his hire. And in this little bottle here I have an elixir which has never been known to fail in any of the things claimed for it. Since the world has got used to taking medicine we must make some concessions to its prejudices. But this in reality is not a medicine at all. It is only a symbol. It is really liquefied prayer and faith."

Martha did not understand anything of what he was saying. She did not try to; she did not want to. She only felt a blind trust in him that filled her heart with unspeakable gladness.

Tremulous with excitement, she doled out her poor dollars to him, seized the precious elixir and hurried away home to Lucy, to whom she was carrying life and strength. The little one made a weak attempt to smile at her mother, but the light flickered away and died into grayness on her face.

"Now mammy's little gal gwine to git well fu' sho'. Mammy done bring huh some'p'n good. Mammy got huh little gal some'p'n fu' to be a Crismus present." Awed and reverent, she tasted the wonderful elixir before giving it to the child. It tasted very like sweetened water to her, but she knew that it was not, and had no doubt of its virtues.

Lucy swallowed it as she swallowed everything her mother brought to her. Poor little one! She had nothing to buoy her up or to fight science with.

In the course of an hour her mother gave her the medicine again, and persuaded herself that there was a perceptible brightening in her daughter's face.

Mrs. Mason, Caroline's mother, called across the hall: "How Lucy dis evenin', Mis' Benson?"

"Oh, I think Lucy air right peart," Martha replied. "Come over an' look at huh."

Mrs. Mason came, and the mother told her about the new faith doctor and his wonderful powers.

"Why, Mis' Mason," she said, "'pears like I could see de change in de child de minute she swallowed dat medicine."

Her neighbor listened in silence, but when she went back to her own room it was to shake her head and murmur: "Po' Marfy, she jes' ez blind ez a bat. She jes' go 'long, holdin' on to dat chile wid all huh might, an' I see death in Lucy's face now. Dey ain' no fait' nur prayer, nur Jack-leg doctors nuther gwine to save huh."

But Martha needed no pity then. She was happy in her self-delusion.

On the morrow the faith doctor came to see Lucy. She had not seemed so well that morning, even to her mother, who remained at home until the doctor arrived. He carried the air of a conqueror, and a baggy umbrella, the latter of which he laid across the foot of the bed as he bent over the moaning child.

"Give me some brown paper," he commanded.

Martha hastened to obey, and the priestly practitioner dampened it in water and laid it on Lucy's head, all the time murmuring prayers—or were they incantations?—to himself. Then he placed pieces of the paper on the soles of the child's feet and on the palms of her hands, and bound them there.

When all this was done he knelt down and prayed aloud, ending with a peculiar version of the Lord's prayer, supposed to have mystic effect. Martha was greatly impressed, but through it all Lucy lay and moaned.

The faith curist rose to go. "Well, we can look to have her out in a few days. Remember, my good woman, much depends upon you. You must try to keep your mind in a state of belief. Are you saved?"

"Oh, yes, sah. I'm a puffessor," said Martha, and having completed his mission, the man of prayers went out, and Caroline again took Martha's place at Lucy's side.

In the next two days Martha saw, or thought she saw, a steady improvement in Lucy. According to instructions, the brown paper was removed every day, moistened, and put back.

Martha had so far spurred her faith that when she went out on Christmas morning she promised to bring Lucy something good for her Christmas dinner, and a pair of shoes against the time of her going out, and also a little doll. She brought them home that night. Caroline had grown tired and, lighting the lamp, had gone home.

"I done brung my little lady bird huh Crismus gif," said Martha, "here's lill' doll and the lill' shoes, honey. How's de baby feel?" Lucy did not answer.

"You sleep?" Martha went over to the bed. The little face was pinched and ashen. The hands were cold.

"Lucy! Lucy!" called the mother. "Lucy! Oh, Gawd! It aint true! She aint daid! My little one, my last one!"

She rushed for the elixir and brought it to the bed. The thin dead face stared back at her, unresponsive.

She sank down beside the bed, moaning. "Daid, daid, oh, my Gawd, gi' me back my chil'! Oh, don' I believe you enough? Oh, Lucy, Lucy, my little lamb! I got you yo' Crismus gif'. Oh, Lucy!"

Christmas Day was set apart for the funeral. The Mission preacher read: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord," and some one said "Amen!" But Martha could not echo it in her heart. Lucy was her last, her one treasured lamb.

A JEKYLL AND HYDE DOG---GUARDED

WHAT a dog may lead a double life—in fact, be a canine Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde—is vouched for by an eminent naturalist, Ernest Seton Thompson. In the book called "Some Animals I Have Known," just published by Scribners, he tells a thrilling story of "Wully," a Scotch collie, that guarded his master's sheep by day and killed the neighbors' sheep at night under the guise of a fox.

Away up in the Cheviots little Wully was born. He and one other of the litter were kept—his brother because he resembled the best dog in the vicinity, and himself because he was a little yellow beauty. His early life was that of a sheep dog in company with an experienced collie, who trained him, and an old shepherd, who was scarcely inferior to them in intelligence.

By the time he was two years old Wully was full grown and had taken a thorough course in sheep. He knew them from ram horn to lamb foot, and old Robin, his master, at length had such confidence in his sagacity that he would frequently stay at the tavern all night while Wully guarded the woolly idiots on the hills. His education had been wisely bestowed, and in most ways he was a very bright little dog, with a future before him.

Then came a great sorrow to Wully. His worthless old master, Robin, cast him off. The dog's next home was in Mousedale, in Derbyshire. His new master, Dorley, with his daughter Huldah, had a farm on the lowland and on the moors had a large number of sheep. These Wully guarded with his old-time sagacity.

He was reserved and preoccupied for a dog—rather too ready to show his teeth to strangers. But he was so faithful that Dorley did not lose a sheep that year, though his neighbors lost many by eagles and foxes. At length came a time when the depredations of a certain big yellow fox became the talk and fear of the country. Whole flocks of sheep were destroyed in a night, as if done by a fox.

Suspicious bloody tracks were at length found leading to Wully's home door, and the neighbors accused him of being the criminal that had long masqueraded as a fox at night. Dorley swore that it was nothing but a jealous conspiracy to rob him of Wully.

"Wully sleeps i' the kitchen every night. Never is oot till he's let to bide wi' the yowes. Why, mon, he's wi oor sheep the year round, and never a hoof have Ah lost."

Dorley became much excited over this abominable attempt against Wully's reputation and life. The neighbors got equally angry, and it was a wise suggestion of Huldah's that quieted them.

"Feyther," said she, "Ah'll sleep i' the kitchen the night. If Wully 'as ae way of gettin' oot Ah'll see it, an' if he's no oot an' sheep's killed on the country side, we'll ha' proof it's na Wully."

That night Huldah stretched herself on the settee and Wully slept as usual underneath the table. As night wore on the dog became restless. He turned on his bed and once or twice got up, stretched, looked at

WULLY, THE JEKYLL AND HYDE SHEEP DOG.

SHEEP BY DAY, KILLED THEM AT NIGHT

Huldah and lay down again. About 2 o'clock he seemed no longer able to resist some strange impulse. He arose, quietly looked toward the low window, then at the motionless girl. Huldah lay still and breathed as though sleeping.

Wully slowly came near and sniffed and breathed his doggy breath in her face. She made no move. He nudged her gently with his nose. Then with his sharp ears forward and his head on one side studied her calm face. Still no sign. He walked quietly to the window, mounted the table without noise, placed his nose under the sash bar and raised the light frame until he could put one paw underneath. Then changing, he put his nose under the sash and raised it high enough to slip out, easing down the frame finally on his rump and tail with an adroitness that told of long practice. Then he disappeared into the darkness.

From her couch Huldah watched in amazement. After waiting for some time to make sure he was gone she arose, intending to call her father at once, but on second thought she decided to await more conclusive proof. She peered into the darkness, but no sign of Wully was to be seen. She put more wood on the fire and lay down again. For over an hour she lay wide awake, listening.

Another hour tick-tocked. She heard a slight sound at the window that made her heart jump. The scratching sound was soon followed by the lifting of the sash, and in a short time Wully was back in the kitchen with the window closed behind him.

Huldah had seen enough. There could no longer be any doubt that the neighbors were right, and more—a new thought flashed into her quick brain; she realized that the weird fox of Monsal was before her. His eye gleamed, and his mane bristled. But he cowered under her gaze and grovelled on the floor, as though begging for mercy. Slowly he crawled nearer and nearer, as if to lick her feet, until quite close, then, with the fury of a tiger, he sprang for her throat.

The girl was taken unawares, but she threw up her arm in time, and Wully's long, gleaming tusks sank into her flesh and grated on the bone.

"Help! help! feyther, feyther!" she shrieked.

Wully was a light weight, and for a moment she flung him off. But there could be no mistaking his purpose. The game was up. It was his life or hers now.

"Feyther! feyther!" she screamed as the yellow fury, striving to kill her, bit and tore the unprojected hands that had so often fed him. In vain she fought to hold him off. He would soon have had her by the throat, when in rushed Dorley.

Straight at him now in the same horrid silence sprang Wully and savagely tore him again and again before a deadly blow from the fagot hook disabled him, dashing him, gasping and writhing, on the stone floor, desperate and done for, but game and defiant to the last.

Another quick blow scattered his brains on the hearth stone, where so long he had been a faithful and honored retainer, and Wully, bright, fierce, trusty, treacherous Wully, quivered a moment, then straightened out and lay forever still.